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Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Human resources management

Letter dated 27 January 2000 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, Ms. Carla Del Ponte, has requested my permission to accept gratis personnel during the current year to assist her in conducting forensic investigations in Kosovo.

You may recall that I wrote a letter dated 9 June 1999 to the President of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly (A/53/1000), after having received a similar request from the previous Prosecutor to accept gratis personnel. Following my endorsement of that request, forensic investigation teams from various countries were deployed in Kosovo and were able to complete the examination of approximately 290 sites in the period from mid-June to October 1999. In addition, there are approximately 300 further sites of interest that require forensic examination. Existing provisions allow for two exhumation teams composed of 66 personnel to examine an estimated 60 sites. However, resources and expertise are not available for the approximately 240 remaining sites.

Because of the large volume of work, the Prosecutor is again seeking a substantial amount of additional resources, comprising gratis personnel with specialized forensic skills. The Prosecutor has determined that approximately 300 additional personnel, performing their work in teams on a rotational basis, would allow the remaining sites to be completed in the year 2000. This would entail about the same number of gratis experts that were used in 1999.

I attach particular importance to the Prosecutor's conviction that the proper investigation of events in Kosovo, and the effective implementation of the mandate of the Tribunal, dictate that the remaining sites be investigated. This work cannot be accomplished during 2000 without the additional assistance of Member States.

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As in 1999, I believe the acceptance of gratis personnel for this large but short-term project would be in accordance with the regime approved by the General Assembly for the use of gratis personnel. The Tribunal would utilize highly specialized personnel for discrete, strictly time-limited tasks to be carried out in the field. The relevant rules and procedures would be followed. In particular, this means that all Member States would be invited to consider the loan of suitable personnel, and that the selection of personnel would take place on the widest geographical basis possible. Administrative arrangements for the acceptance of such offers would involve the conclusion of a standard agreement and the payment by the donor country of a charge for costs incurred by the Tribunal in supporting the gratis personnel.

I recognize at the same time that the payment of an additional charge could be prohibitive for certain countries that are not able to bear expenses in addition to those incurred for the personnel themselves. In this connection, arrangements will be made by the United Nations to ensure that all potential donors may participate. This, I believe, would provide further assurance that the gratis personnel component would represent a broad geographical range, while upholding the principle that voluntary contributions may not impact on assessed budgetary resources.

In light of the above, I intend to approve the Prosecutor's request to accept expert gratis personnel for the purpose of conducting forensic investigations in Kosovo in 2000 for a limited period of six months.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**
Secretary-General